

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A polymer compound comprising:  
an alkali soluble group (i), wherein  
at least one hydrogen atom of a hydroxyl group in the alkali soluble group (i) is  
protected by an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group (ii) represented by the  
general formula (1):  
---CH<sub>2</sub>-O-R (1)  
(wherein R represents an organic group containing no more than 20 carbon atoms  
and at least one hydrophilic group), and  
wherein the polymer compound exhibits changed alkali solubility under the action  
of acid.
2. (Currently amended) a polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the  
alkali soluble group (i) is ~~at least one~~ selected from the group consisting of an alcoholic hydroxyl  
group, a phenolic hydroxyl group, ~~or~~ and a carboxyl group.
3. (Original) A polymer compound according to claim 2, wherein a carbon atom  
adjacent to the carbon atom connected to the alcoholic hydroxyl group is bonded to at least one  
fluorine atom.
4. (Currently amended) A polymer compound according to claim 1, wherein the  
hydrophilic group is ~~at least one~~ selected from the group consisting of a carbonyl group, an ester  
group, an alcoholic hydroxyl group, an ether group, an imino group, ~~or~~ and an amino group.
5. (Original) A photoresist composition comprising:  
a base material resin component (A) which exhibits changed alkali  
solubility under the action of acid; and  
an acid generator component (B) which generates the acid on exposure to  
radiation, wherein  
the base material resin component (A) is the polymer compound according  
to any one of claims 1 to 4.
6. (Original) A resist pattern formation method comprising:  
forming a photoresist film on a substrate using the photoresist composition  
according to claim 5;

exposing the photoresist film; and  
developing the exposed photoresist film to form a resist pattern.